

- Use as a resource for Environmental/Cultural Education
- Link Carlito Springs to Ojito de San Antonio with trails
- Grafting program to preserve heirloom orchard

What **information** exists and who has it?

- *Acequia Madre de San Antonio* Community Ditch Association has information on deeds, site history, and families that resided on site and in community
- Talking Talons bird survey
- A book on Tijeras Canyon has information on water
- Lab of Anthropology should have relevant data
- Need a plant inventory (UNM Biology student)
- Need water quality studies done by Bernalillo County Environmental Health
- Gary Hefkin, current Commissioner and Secretary of the *Acequia Madre de San Antonio* Community Ditch Association, retains written records on behalf of the Acequia Association.

VI. MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES FOR RESOURCES, VISITORS, AND STEWARDSHIP

The information compiled in this section is a result of analyzing site baseline data and key issues identified through community input. This section begins with a statement that describes the desired future conditions at Ojito. This statement was developed with strong community involvement and it is not meant to limit future site opportunities or decisions.

The County will use management objectives and strategies to assure that all resources are available to the public, yet cared for in a manner that will sustain them over time. Early in the planning process, those involved recognized the need for balancing habitat protection with public use. These management objectives try to achieve such a balance. Zones have been developed with specific objectives and strategies in mind. Despite similarities, they may vary considerably from one zone to the next. The management objectives and strategies included in this section are not static and will be reviewed periodically in terms of their effectiveness. If changes are needed, they will be implemented in a timely manner to assure that damage or misuse does not continue unchecked. See Map 2. Ojito de San Antonio Site Plan for an illustration of the management zones.

## **A. Management Zones**

### *i. Historical and Cultural Zone*

This area includes the *acequia* and the foundation from the old house.

### *ii. Forest Zone*

The majority of the property falls within this management zone. Much of the property has steep slopes and contains typical flora coverage found on the rest of the south facing slopes of the Sandia Mountains.

### *iii. Riparian and Orchard Zones*

The ribbon of deciduous vegetation that bisects the property, the dry land terraces at the bottom of the canyon, and the orchard area is included in this management zone.

### *iv. Archaeological Zone*

This zone(s) is very site specific and will not be shown on any maps. It will be managed with the sole intention of preserving those elements of the past that may be found on the property. Because of the sensitive nature of these areas, the primary management objective will be to limit any impact that could occur on these sites.

**B. Management Objectives and Strategies****J. i. Historic and Cultural Zone Management Objectives and Strategies**

- **The area surrounding the built environment acts as a staging area for group discussions and presentations. Any additional construction and/or maintenance of this area shall be done with human safety in mind and design should consider human safety.**
- **Trails used to access these areas should incorporate a higher design standard to facilitate a higher level of public access. Wider construction and stabilized surfaces on trails is appropriate (e.g. crusher fines).**
- **Any renovation work done on the house foundation should be compatible with existing colors and textures. Weathered or recycled materials shall be used when possible to maintain the historic character of the area.**
- **Investigate feasibility for a non-profit group to maintain homesite foundation structure and provide public education seminars regarding bear behavior, community history, wildlife habitat, and *acequia* traditions.**
  - Conduct needs assessment and feasibility study surrounding implementation of an open-air environmental education facility (open air structure).
- **Complete a cultural landscape study of the Ojito property. [See Appendix E for a preliminary cultural landscape evaluation by the Cultural Landscapes Program of the National Park Service.]**
- **Monitor water quality and quantity for adverse changes.**
  - Maintain water flow to *acequia* and subsequent delivery to San Antonio community.
  - Limit accessibility to the man-made *acequia* by the public.

**ii. Forest Zone Management Objectives and Strategies**

- **Trails in this area shall be of a design standard that will maintain the natural character of the area. Less disturbance adjacent to these trails is appropriate.**
- **Maintain the rural nature of this area. Ensure a balance of healthy forest resources with appropriate fire suppression measures.**
- **Re-establish healthy forest conditions throughout the property.**
  - Write, adopt, and implement an *Ojito Forest Health Restoration Plan*.
  - Reduce risks of catastrophic wildfire on property.
- **Maintain and enhance wildlife habitat.**
  - Designate the site, as an *Important Bird Area* and balance conservation of bird habitat with the needs of other species.
  - Complete an inventory of wildlife species.
  - Monitor wildlife behavior and activity.

- **Inventory plant species on the property**
  - Inventory and monitor presence of invasive species
  - Implement volunteer plant removal projects
  - Monitor for possible presence of sensitive plant species
  - Introduce threatened or endangered plant species where appropriate.

**K.** *iii. Riparian and Orchard Zone Management Objectives and Strategies*

- **This area shall be closed to the public during certain periods of the year as determined by nesting activities of certain bird species and during fruit producing periods for which bears have been attracted to the site.**
- **Maintain and preserve orchard for visitor enjoyment and wildlife habitat**
  - **Implement tree pruning to strengthen trees and support bear accessibility**
    - Investigate options for orchard irrigation
    - Work with Acequia Association for reintroduction of surface water irrigation of orchard
    - **Collaborate with interested parties to develop a consistent stewardship program at the site.**
- **Complete inventory of orchard species and implement a program to promote and preserve heirloom species**
  - Propagate additional orchard plantings and establish a grafting program from existing heirloom species.
- **All group activities in this area shall be supervised and monitored to assure that damage to the resources does not occur.**
- **Trails that are to be used to access these areas should use a moderate design standard to facilitate an adequate level of public access without degrading the environment. Wider construction and less fuel loading adjacent to such trails is appropriate.**
- **Invasive species such as Siberian Elm shall be controlled in this area with annual maintenance to prevent reinfestation.**
- **Enhance riparian corridor**
  - Maintain water supply to riparian vegetation
  - Enhance riparian vegetation with additional native plantings
  - Monitor and prevent additional site erosion.
- **Develop visitor management programs that protect bird nesting activities and wildlife foraging.**

**L.**  
**M.**

**N. iv. Archaeological Zone Management Objectives and Strategies**

- **Identify and protect archeological sites.**
  - Minimize visitor impacts and access to archeological sites.
  - **Enter sites into NM Archeological Records Management.**
- **Existing trails and social paths to these sensitive areas shall be eliminated.**

*v. Visitor Management Objectives and Strategies*

Ojito de San Antonio is a natural draw for people seeking quiet refuge. Public access to Ojito is important because it fulfills a goal of the *Major Public Open Space Facility Plan*. Ojito's role as critical habitat for bears and other species requires that recreational use be balanced with natural and cultural resource conservation. This balance means that not all types of recreation are appropriate at Ojito, and that the area may require seasonal closures to protect said resources. Appropriate recreational and educational activities include hiking, picnicking, nature walks, research, and other educational activities.

- **Minimize conflicts between wildlife and humans**
  - Assess the site's carrying capacity for recreation and educational activities by determining *Limits of Acceptable Change*
  - Develop baseline standards for monitoring impacts and change at Ojito
  - Monitor impacts and changes
  - **Implement corrective action**
    - Balance recreation and education uses with conservation of wildlife habitat and cultural resources
    - Minimize human and wildlife conflicts through trail location and design, signage, seasonal closures and education
    - Educate visitors and enforce Bernalillo County Open Space Rules and Regulations.
- **Provide adequate parking, trails, and other facilities as needed for visitor activities**
  - Assess parking options in conjunction with the County's Public Works Department
  - The existing access road shall serve as a firebreak and be maintained in an appropriate manner
  - Evaluate and provide options for accessibility improvements for persons with disabilities
  - Encourage foot access to the Cibola National Forest
  - Post regulations at information kiosk.
- Develop an internal trail system that provides recreational and educational opportunities to visitors while protecting sensitive site resources
  - Adopt Open Space trail standards for different uses and/or areas (e.g. IMBA's trail building and maintenance guidelines)
  - Build sustainable trail network at Ojito to reduce maintenance requirements over time
  - Draft trail network map included with site plan on following page.
- **Develop interpretive programs and exhibits that explore the site's unique characteristics, history, and culture**
  - Offer day-trip opportunities to school groups
  - Plan bear interpretation events
  - Investigate potential for Fall Harvest Festival
  - Conduct trail building and maintenance seminars

- Install signs highlighting notable species and habitat conservation themes.

- **Pursue public art opportunities that convey Ojito’s unique story to visitors.**
- **Adopt Specific Rules and Regulations for visitor use**
  - Pets shall be allowed in this area and must be kept on a leash pursuant to County ordinance
  - No person shall smoke in this area
  - No fireworks are allowed in this area
  - No person shall damage, injure, collect, remove or disturb any object of paleontological, archaeological, or historical interest or value located on these lands
  - Bicycles are not appropriate in this area due to the sensitive nature of the environment
  - No trapping, hunting, or fishing shall be allowed in this area
  - There shall be no games or miscellaneous activities in this area without written approval from the Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation Department
  - Request amendment to Bernalillo County ordinance to strengthen these rules and regulations.

#### **O.** *vii. Site Stewardship Objectives and Strategies*

Site stewardship is critical for the continued success of the County’s Open Space program. Since the County purchased the property in 1999, many organizations have donated their time to help inventory resources and begin improvements for natural resource restoration and public safety needs. The following objectives would aid in the development of a sustainable stewardship program.

- Organize a cadre of East Mountain Open Space volunteers
  - Broaden the scope of existing Open Space organizations to support East Mountain projects
  - Develop consistent communication tools among volunteers, organizations, and land managers.
- Support volunteer initiatives at Ojito in a timely manner
  - Improve efficiency of Bernalillo County response to volunteer requests
  - Identify primary contacts for Ojito and Bernalillo County
  - Collaboratively develop annual work plans considering staff, equipment and budget needs.
- Develop stewardship projects that significantly improve Ojito and also provide benefits to adjacent landowners.

### **C. Management Method**

The *Limits of Acceptable Change* (LAC) is a management tool that identifies recreational carrying capacity standards for a specific land area. Principally, the LAC process is a means of resolving conflict. It may be thought of as a method for land managers to resolve conflicts between *managing visitors to provide for the experiences they seek and to deal with the problems of their social and biophysical impacts* (McCool 1996). The LAC process is most beneficial in situations where (1) stakeholders are willing to establish a hierarchy of natural resource goals, (2) where two or more established goals are in conflict, and (3) where all goals may be compromised to some extent as long as they meet or exceed established standards (Cole and McCool 1998). Where these conditions can be established, Bernalillo County intends to use the LAC method as a useful

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strategy for continued planning and implementation of resource-based recreational activities at Ojito. [See Appendix F for more LAC information.]

## **D. Operations and Maintenance**

The operation and maintenance of Ojito depends heavily on Bernalillo County staff to work with community organizations and residents on varying stewardship projects. Maintenance needs include forestry-thinning projects, orchard restoration, site improvements, and trail rehabilitation. Administration and event coordination of volunteer stewardship projects will require County commitment of staff time and departmental resources. The County would provide funding, equipment, and staff time to assist where feasible.

## **VII. INTERAGENCY COORDINATION**

Ojito will benefit from interagency coordination in several ways. Key coordinating partners and issues are listed below.

### **A. Acequia Madre de San Antonio Ditch Association**

The County intends to continue dialogue with the Acequia Association regarding our mutually beneficial interests of (i) establishing Ojito as an Open Space Preserve and thwarting impending development; (ii) maintaining and preserving the integrity of the ancient acequia network; and, (iii) improving the viability of natural resources onsite and enhancing wildlife habitat.

### **B. USFS/Cibola National Forest**

Ojito is bordered by the Cibola National Forest on the far north and west sides. The site has several informal connecting trails to existing USFS trails in the Cibola National Forest. Formal trail connections will be evaluated in conjunction with the USFS and include:

- Ojito to Faulty Trail
- Ojito to Sandia South Peak trail
- Connector trails from Carlito Springs to Ojito de San Antonio

### **C. Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation Department, Public Works Division, and the New Mexico Department of Transportation**

Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation (BCPR) and Public Works Division (BCPW) have prepared an East Mountain Trails and Bikeways Master Plan. BCC adoption of this plan was approved on April 26, 2005. The Trails and Bikeways Master Plan attempts to link County- and City-owned Open Space properties, residential areas, commercial nodes, and lands of the Sandia Ranger District. This will be accomplished through a system of suitable shoulder improvements on State of New Mexico and County roads, and hard and soft surface trails either within public rights-of-way or on private properties. The Trails and Bikeways Master Plan has incorporated all County and City Open Space properties and their respective access points and trailheads identified in each RMP. Continued coordination with BCPR and BCPW shall be maintained as the Trails and Bikeways Master Plan and each RMP are implemented.

### **D. National Park Service/Cultural Landscapes Program**

In 2002, the Cultural Landscapes Program of the National Park Service prepared a preliminary cultural landscape evaluation of Ojito de San Antonio. [See Appendix E.] Additional assessment is required to identify resource analysis priorities, appropriate uses, and potential eligibility of the property for the National Register of Historic Places. This analysis process may show that Ojito has precious and sensitive cultural landscape qualities that provide a record of how communities and individuals have, over time, adapted to and modified landscapes in the East Mountains.

### **E. New Mexico Department of Game and Fish**

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish could provide biological reviews, habitat assessments, wildlife inventories, and baseline studies at all four County EMOS properties. These types of wildlife